

HONORING PRIVATE FIRST CLASS JONES

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as many of us have been doing over the past couple of years and months, I paid tribute to a fallen soldier in my district this past weekend. Private First Class Jones was young and vibrant and loved by his family. Those who loved him had to bury him, for he is another of those now fallen from the violence in Iraq. We pay tribute to him for his great service and his love of country.

It is time now for America to love her own even more. It is time for our soldiers to come home. As we prepare for the honoring of those fallen in many wars, it becomes more than a disservice to those brave men and women for the President not to join this Congress in the resolution of this misdirected mission, in order to ensure that our troops come home with accolades and recognition because their mission has been successful.

The political mission is a failure, and it's time now for us to vote on a supplemental that has benchmarks and, as well, timelines to redeploy our troops, whether to Kuwait or otherwise. Our troops must come home. I pay tribute to the fallen. I pay tribute to Private First Class Jones.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HILL). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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THE MYSTERIOUS MURDER OF TOM WALES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, in recent months, the American people have been riveted by the disclosure surrounding the firing of eight U.S. Attorneys, including John McKay of my hometown of Seattle.

The other day, the number two person at the Justice Department testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Even in jaded Washington, D.C., the revelations were so shocking

that the Washington Post published an editorial, which I submit for printing in the RECORD. Let me read part of it.

"James B. Comey, the straight-as-an-arrow former number two official of the Justice Department, yesterday offered the Senate Judiciary Committee an account of Bush administration lawlessness so shocking it would have been unbelievable coming from a less reputable source."

The American people understand that political appointees are a fact of life when a new President takes office, but the American people demand that competence and integrity overrule political party affiliation.

The Justice Department has thousands of dedicated public servants who know what it means to be respected and uphold the law. And then there is Gonzalez.

The revelations began over the firing of eight U.S. Attorneys. Now there is a new revelation about Gonzalez trying to force the previous Attorney General to agree to anything the White House wanted. What else don't we know?

For the last 6 years, congressional oversight was nonexistent. What cases were priorities and what cases were not? And why not? What did and did not happen following the murder of an Assistant U.S. Attorney in Seattle?

My friend, Tom Wales, had been the Assistant U.S. Attorney in Seattle under the previous administration. He was a well-respected law enforcement officer known for his pursuit of white color criminals. He was also a vocal and strong advocate for gun control. Tom was shot and killed in his home while working at his computer one late night in October. If Tom was killed, as some suspect, because of those he brought to justice, then he died in the line of duty. No one has ever been charged, although there are news accounts that indicate authorities have a prime suspect.

Now there is a new suspicion. Did the White House want its appointee in Seattle, John McKay, fired in part because he was vigorously pursuing the Tom Wales case?

Someone sent me a blog recently asking the same fundamental question: Why would Justice not throw every available resource into finding Tom's killer? Why would they not want the investigation by their own U.S. Attorney in Seattle to proceed with every possible resource?

Some bloggers say it is all because of Tom's advocacy for gun control, but the answer may be tragically simpler. Maybe Gonzalez wanted the Republican U.S. Attorney appointee in Seattle to spend all his time on something else; to find or, if necessary, invent voter fraud in a close Washington governor's race, narrowly won by the Democrat. Could they have been that arrogant, that uncaring about the death of a good man, an Assistant U.S. Attorney? Most people would have dismissed that notion until recently. Now the revelations about the Attorney General and

the attitude he took toward cases, perhaps including the murder of a Federal officer in Seattle, cannot be adequately described by words like shocking.

At this point, I believe there are two necessary mandatory actions that must be taken. The Attorney General must go, now. His allegiance to partisan political interests above his oath to uphold the laws of the United States is outrageous.

Secondly, even if it requires the appointment of an outside independent prosecutor, the Justice Department should immediately, vigorously and conclusively investigate the murder of Tom Wales and not stop until the killer is charged and brought to justice. We owe that to Tom Wales, his family, and every law enforcement officer who risks his or her life every day in service to the American people.

[From the Washington Post, May 16, 2007]

MR. COMEY'S TALE: A STANDOFF AT A HOSPITAL BEDSIDE SPEAKS VOLUMES ABOUT ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES

James B. Comey, the straight-as-an-arrow former No. 2 official at the Justice Department, yesterday offered the Senate Judiciary Committee an account of Bush administration lawlessness so shocking it would have been unbelievable coming from a less reputable source. The episode involved a 2004 nighttime visit to the hospital room of then-Attorney General John D. Ashcroft by Alberto Gonzales, then the White House counsel, and Andrew H. Card Jr., then the White House chief of staff. Only the broadest outlines of this visit were previously known: that Mr. Comey, who was acting as attorney general during Mr. Ashcroft's illness, had refused to recertify the legality of the administration's warrantless wiretapping program; that Mr. Gonzales and Mr. Card had tried to do an end-run around Mr. Comey; that Mr. Ashcroft had rebuffed them.

Mr. Comey's vivid depiction, worthy of a Hollywood script, showed the lengths to which the administration and the man who is now attorney general were willing to go to pursue the surveillance program. First, they tried to coerce a man in intensive care—a man so sick he had transferred the reins of power to Mr. Comey—to grant them legal approval. Having failed, they were willing to defy the conclusions of the nation's chief law enforcement officer and pursue the surveillance without Justice's authorization. Only in the face of the prospect of mass resignations—Mr. Comey, FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III and most likely Mr. Ashcroft himself—did the president back down.

As Mr. Comey testified, "I couldn't stay, if the administration was going to engage in conduct that the Department of Justice had said had no legal basis." The crisis was averted only when, the morning after the program was reauthorized without Justice's approval, President Bush agreed to fix whatever problem Justice had with it (the details remain classified). "We had the president's direction to do . . . what the Justice Department believed was necessary to put this matter on a footing where we could certify to its legality," Mr. Comey said.

The dramatic details should not obscure the bottom line: the administration's alarming willingness, championed by, among others, Vice President Cheney and his counsel, David Addington, to ignore its own lawyers. Remember, this was a Justice Department that had embraced an expansive view of the president's inherent constitutional powers, allowing the administration to dispense with